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ABSTRACT

This book reports on a national study of the master's degree, how people involved view their experiences, development of a typology of four "idealized" program types, and identification of characteristics associated with positive master's experiences. The study used an open-ended, multicase design grounded in interviews with 781 individuals (students, alumni, and employers, and administrators) representing 47 master's programs in 11 fields of study. Part 1 of the book provides the setting for the study including a review of the literature and a discussion of the study's approach. Part 2 organizes the interview material around choices stakeholders make in key decision situations. In part 3, a chapter is given to each of the four idealized program types: ancillary, career advancement, apprenticeship, and community centered. In part 4, the interview material is organized around those program attributes that most contributed to quality master's experiences. These focus on four clusters: culture, planned learning experiences, resources, and leadership and the human dimension. The book concludes that master's programs appear to be remarkably successful with stakeholders expressing a high degree of esteem for the programs. Recommendations are made to policymakers, professional and accrediting associations, employers, institutional administrators, faculty and program administrators, and students. A technical appendix is provided as are reference notes keyed to each chapter. (Contains 110 references.)

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